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Silverton: The key players

A who's who in the attempt to clean up pollution emanating from Silverton's abandoned mines.

Animas River Stakeholders Group: This group of concerned citizens, industry officials and government representatives formed in 1994 with the goal of cleaning up pollution from Silverton-area mines. Its co-coordinators are Peter Butler, chairman of the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission; Bill Simon, principal scientist at Alpine Environmental Services; and Steve Fearn, engineer and longtime Silvertonian.

Sunnyside Gold Corp.: The last major mining company to operate in the Silverton area, it pulled out in 1991, creating a major economic crisis. Sunnyside's liability for cleaning up mining waste, which it denies, is a major topic of debate. Sunnyside is now owned by Kinross Gold Corp., an international mining conglomerate that made more than \$4 billion in revenues in 2012.

Other mine owners are involved, including Todd Hennis, president of the company that owns Gold King Mine. He's a member of the Animas River Stakeholders group and also is leader of Sunnyside Mine Pool Property Owners Association, an informal group that he says opposes Superfund designation.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: It considers Cement Creek, which flows into the Animas River in Silverton, one of the most polluted waterways in the state. It has offered to lobby to make Silverton a Superfund site, which would bring federal money and aid and could give it significant unilateral powers to extract a settlement from Sunnyside.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: The federal agency manages a large portion of the land in the Cement Creek drainage. The U.S. Forest Service manages part of the land, and some is in private hands.

U.S. Geological Survey and Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Their studies show that since 2008, several species of trout have disappeared, and the volume of insects has dropped precipitously in the Upper Animas River. Zinc concentrations are rising there.

Silverton residents: Opinions vary in Silverton about whether becoming a Superfund site is a good thing. Bev Rich, chairwoman of the San Juan County Historical Society, San

Juan County treasurer and lifelong Silvertonian, and Peter McKay, San Juan County commissioner, oppose the designation.

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